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SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S PARTICIPATION AT ARCTIC OCEAN  
CONFERENCE IN GREENLAND

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REF: COPENHAGEN 288

11. (SBU) Summary: Deputy Secretary Negroponte led the U.S. delegation to the Arctic Ocean Conference hosted by the Kingdom of Denmark and Greenland Home Rule Government in Ilulissat, Greenland May 27-29. In closed discussions during the conference and at a concluding press conference, all participants stressed mutual interests in the Arctic Ocean. In these and private bilateral meetings with the Danish, Greenlandic, Norwegian, and Canadians (septels), the Deputy Secretary emphasized USG engagement in the Arctic and encouraged cooperative, pragmatic solutions to shared problems in the face of changing conditions. He also sought a common approach with the Danes and Norwegians on engagement with Moscow.

12. (SBU) In an "Ilulissat Declaration" issued at the conclusion of the conference, the five Arctic Ocean coastal states affirmed their commitment to the law of the sea legal framework and to the orderly settlement of any possible overlapping claims in the Arctic. They also committed to ensure the protection of the fragile marine environment of the Arctic Ocean and to promote safety at sea. The declaration included references to strengthening search and rescue capabilities and capacity around the Arctic Ocean, strengthening cooperation on the collection of scientific data concerning the continental shelf and other scientific research, and contributing to the work of the Arctic Council and other relevant fora. End Summary.

13. (U) Background: The conference was a Danish initiative, announced by FM Moeller last fall, in response to public perceptions of a potentially dangerous "race in the Arctic" between states with overlapping territorial claims in the Arctic Ocean. In addition to the Deputy Secretary, the U.S. delegation consisted of (U.S.) OES A/S Claudia McMurray, Department Legal Advisor John Bellinger, Ambassador to Denmark James Cain, D Special Assistant Edward Wittenstein, and REO Hall (note taker). Danish FM Per Stig Moeller and Greenland Home Rule (GHR) Premier Hans Enoksen were co-hosts; GHR Minister for Finance and Foreign Affairs, Aleqa Hammond, also participated for the Greenlandic delegation. The

Russian delegation was led by FM Sergei Lavrov; Norwegian delegation was led by FM Jonas Gahr Stoere; Minister of Natural Resources Gary Lunn led the Canadian delegation. The text of the "Ilulissat Declaration" is available at <http://www.um.dk/en>.

#### Words from the Co-hosts

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14. (U) The conference opened with welcoming remarks from FM Moeller, who outlined the need for Arctic coastal states to commit to an orderly and rules-based process to settle territorial claims, and the mutual interest in cooperation on issues to protect the Arctic region. Premier Enoksen emphasized the need to involve Arctic residents in issues affecting their livelihoods, a theme echoed throughout the conference by GHR FM Hammond and Canadian Minister Lunn.

#### Expert Presentations Spark Questions

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15. (U) Words of welcome were followed by presentations on climate change affecting the Arctic by Dr. Pal Prestrud, Director of the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research (Oslo); on issues relating to local inhabitants and indigenous communities by Aqqaq Luk Lynge, Vice Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council; and on commercial opportunities in the Arctic by Sergey Frank, former Russian transport minister and CEO of a Russian shipping company, Sovcomflots.

16. (U) Asked by FM Stoere about the state of Arctic scientific research, Dr. Prestrud admitted that on key issues, data was either short-term or lacking. Research being conducted as part of International Polar Year (IPY) would help, but needed to be followed up. Stoere said

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Norway, as the current chair of the Arctic Council, would convene a sub-ministerial political meeting to discuss the results of the Ilulissat conference. The Greenland Premier agreed such a meeting was important, and urged that indigenous Arctic residents have a voice at that meeting.

17. (U) Lynge emphasized colonial errors of the past (including relocation of indigenous people from a community near Thule AFB) and asserted that "all Inuit own the Arctic." Asked by FM Moeller whether he was afraid of new opportunities in the Arctic, Lynge replied "we are not afraid of anything when we are included in the response." He cited increased cooperation with U.S. researchers as positive and concluded that "we need your assistance and you need our (traditional) knowledge." Canadian minister Lunn lauded Inuit cultural respect for the environment and said that while continental shelf territorial claims could only be handled by sovereign states, local and indigenous residents of the Arctic should be involved in decision-making. FM Lavrov asked Lynge whether existing Arctic institutions needed to be modified. Lynge urged greater indigenous participation in all Arctic institutions.

18. (U) Russian CEO Frank emphasized that commercial opportunities for increased shipping in an increasingly ice-free Arctic were not for the faint of heart, because profit requires high up-front costs for specialized shipping technologies. He urged Russian, Norwegian and Danish ship builders to cooperate to prevent the industry from migrating to lower-cost Asia.

#### Russians Defensive, Revive Dormant SAR Proposal

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19. (SBU) Though requested by FM Moeller to address "General foreign and security policy issues/challenges in relation to

the Arctic Ocean," Russian FM Lavrov instead chose to emphasize other themes in the afternoon session. On climate change, he discounted human activity as a driver for global warming in the Arctic, saying the issue requires further study including evidence of cyclical warming there. FM Moeller later volunteered his own view that sunspots play an important role in global warming; FM Stoere countered that the best scientific evidence on global warming is incorporated in the IPCC report, and urged all to base their policies on the precautionary principle.

¶10. (SBU) Lavrov downplayed international reaction to the planting of a Russian flag on the North Pole sea bottom in 2007 as a misunderstanding, expressing Russian respect for the UN Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) framework to resolve competing territorial claims. On indigenous participation, Lavrov claimed Russia listened "attentively" to concerns of indigenous residents of the Russian Arctic, saying that protection of indigenous rights is "integral" to Russian Arctic policy.

¶11. SBU) Lavrov concluded by proposing the creation of an Arctic search and rescue (SAR) organization, preferably with a unified coordination of service. The Deputy Secretary asked for clarification of the proposal, saying the U.S. came to the conference prepared to support discussions about a possible SAR agreement between the five states and perhaps others. Lavrov responded that the Russian proposal had been tabled in the Arctic Council several years ago, and would be something for "our professionals to follow-up." FM Stoere suggested the issue be presented to the Arctic Council; the Deputy Secretary, FM Lavrov and FM Moeller voiced agreement. Premier Enoksen praised potential cooperation on SAR and said Greenland and Iceland had already had some discussions.

#### U.S. Promotes Dialogue and Science

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¶12. (SBU) The Deputy Secretary opened his discussion of "Cooperation in relation to the Arctic Ocean" by noting that while the U.S. is not a party of the UNCLOS, we treat it as a matter of customary international law, and the Administration

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is seeking Senate ratification. He urged participants to consider resolving existing maritime boundary disputes in addition to new Arctic continental shelf claims. To help to understand the science of the Arctic, the U.S. is committed to marine scientific research and urges all states to be prompt and responsive to requests for marine scientific research within their exclusive economic zones, he said. Areas for potential cooperation between the five and other interested parties include SAR; oil and gas guidelines adopted by the Arctic Council in 2002, which could be updated; as could shipping guidelines in the International Maritime Organization (IMO). FM Moeller thanked the Deputy Secretary for his "promising remarks" on UNCLOS ratification, and agreed upon the need for increased scientific research, especially into the Gulf Stream and other ocean currents.

#### Canada "On Track" in North

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¶13. (SBU) In his presentation on "Operational issues in relation to the Arctic Ocean," minister Lunn noted the importance to Canada of its "Northern Strategy" announced by PM Harper. He highlighted Canadian support for IPY projects, Canadian-Danish cooperation in mapping the continental shelf (for which Canada has set aside Canadian \$40 million over the next four years), and said Canada was "on track" to submit its claim to the UNCLOS commission by 2013. He emphasized the need for Arctic coastal state cooperation in the Arctic, and listed Canadian agreements with Denmark, the U.S., and Russia there. On Arctic shipping, Canada is considering

making a voluntary ship inspection system mandatory. FM Moeller quipped that despite Denmark's dispute with Canada over Hans Island ("which of course is Danish"), Denmark had found a way to cooperate with Canada over the use of that site.

#### Norway Pushes Arctic Council Follow-up, More on Flag-Planting

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¶14. (SBU) FM Stoere began his presentation on the theme of "Protection of the marine environment in relation to the Arctic Ocean" by citing growing threats to the Arctic environment posed by oil shipping or rig accidents and increased tourist cruises. While a legal "toolbox" currently exists in the UNCLOS, it is not adequate, Stoere maintained. Some in the Norwegian Parliament propose the creation of an Arctic treaty, but he did not think that necessary. UNCLOS allocates rights and obligations and the IMO regulates shipping, so there is no lack of rules. Arctic coastal states now need to set policies and implement them.

¶15. (SBU) Also important, Stoere said, was the need to follow up in the Arctic Council, with more focus on policy making. He proposed that a deputy ministerial meeting be held in the fall to report on Ilulissat outcomes, raise the SAR proposal, revise oil and gas guidelines, and discuss short-lived climate drivers such as soot and methane. Norway also supports follow-up of IPY with further marine research. In response, FM Moeller agreed that there was no need for another Arctic policy forum or treaty. He urged the use of the IMO for discussions of maritime safety. That said, he said "we cannot exclude the possibility of follow-up meetings of this group (of five)."

¶16. (SBU) Responding to a reference in FM Stoere's presentation of Russia's flag-planting episode, Lavrov emphasized that the action did not signify a claim to the Pole. He cited the U.S. planting of a flag on the moon or climbers planting their national flags on Everest as more analogous to the Russian action. D encouraged cooperation in the delimitation of the continental shelf; Lunn cited Canadian cooperation with Denmark over Hans Island; and Lavrov cited Russian cooperation with Norway. FM Moeller summed up this discussion by observing that "planting a flag does not mean ownership." Greenland FM Hammond praised respect by the coastal states of UNCLOS and urged strengthening of the IMO.

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¶17. (SBU) FM Moeller wrapped up the conference discussion period by soliciting and receiving agreement from participants for the Ilulissat Declaration, which was then made public. Moeller summed up action items, including follow up with the Arctic Council and IMO, and the imperative of considering impacts of policies on local Arctic inhabitants. In his concluding remarks, Premier Enoksen thanked all delegations for the spirit of unity apparent at the conference. Signaling concern over U.S. listing of the polar bear as a threatened species, Enoksen said indigenous peoples ancestors had lived off Arctic animals for thousands of years without ever threatening their extinction. He thanked FM Moeller for his initiative in conceiving the conference, and the Danish state for its support to Greenland, expressing hope that the Danish state be a role model to others for its treatment of its indigenous population.

#### Press Probe in Vain for Conflict

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¶18. (U) At the concluding press conference, FM Moeller declared that Denmark's aims for the conference had been fulfilled and described the joint commitment of participating

states to the legal framework of the UNCLOS. FM Stoere announced his intention to convoke a meeting of all Arctic Council members to share the results of the Ilulissat conference, and emphasized the need for new policies on SAR. The Deputy Secretary highlighted U.S. research initiatives totaling \$400 million annually for the past six years, the need for unfettered research cooperation, and the importance of SAR, shipping, environmental protection, commercial fishing and adherence to the law of the sea. Minister Lunn emphasized that the continental shelf delimitation would follow an "orderly, rules-based process," not a "race," and that the "peoples of the north need to be a part of the solution." FM Lavrov emphasized Russia's intention to resolve issues through negotiation and complement the work of the Arctic and Barents Euro-Arctic Councils. He announced two initiatives: the creation of a Russian safety system when implementing economic and infrastructure projects in the Arctic, and the resurrection Russia's SAR proposal in the Arctic Council. FM Lavrov thanked Norway as Council President, and pledged to "further strengthen scientific cooperation with all our neighbors on the basis of rules as part of the Law of the Sea."

¶19. (SBU) In the question and answer session that followed opening statements, FM Lavrov dismissed as "hypothetical" questions about possible joint territorial claims under UNCLOS, saying "we have agreed we will follow rules and the (UNCLOS) commission will decide based on the scientific evidence." Later, in response to a question about why the UN is not mentioned in the Declaration, FM Lavrov quipped "I believe our colleagues (in the press) are very tired, since they are raising non-existent issues." (Note: the UNCLOS is not explicitly mentioned in the declaration, but rather "the law of the sea" is mentioned, since the U.S. is not a yet a party.)

¶20. (U) Asked why, given the unity emphasized by all participants, there was a need to meet at all, FM Moeller replied that he felt it was important to clarify shared views and commitments to the rule of law as Arctic coastal states. Moeller later said that "it would be strange if there were not overlapping claims," for the commission to decide. The Deputy Secretary emphasized the opportunity for cooperation and collaboration on issues of common concern, including safety at sea, scientific collaboration, and climate change. Asked about the impact of the Ilulissat Declaration on other states, FM Moeller said the Declaration applied only to the five Arctic coastal states, which did not "substitute" for the Arctic Council. FM Stoere said Norway favored an open dialogue with other interested states on Arctic issues.

¶21. (U) Asked whether global warming was positive or negative for the Arctic, FM Lavrov said the issue required further research, but where opportunities arose, they should

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be pursued. Lunn said there was no question warming is affecting the peoples of the Arctic and states should do all they could to help them mitigate and adapt to changes. FM Moeller said warming had positive and negative effects, including positive effects for Greenland, which gains more access to resources through warming, but negative effects for the rest of the world. He cited international efforts to deal with the ozone hole as far back as 1992 as a model of what can be done to address global warming. Premier Enoksen listed examples of how warming is affecting Greenlanders in both positive (e.g. the return of cod to Greenland's waters, longer growing season, access to previously ice-covered mining resources) and negative (undermining infrastructure including building foundations, landing strips) ways. He concluded that climate change was cause for concern to Greenland and the rest of the world, and it would be important for Arctic peoples to have a voice on the issue. FM Stoere cited the IPCC's conclusions that greenhouse gas



emissions be curbed and expressed hope for an agreement at the 2009 climate summit in Copenhagen.

¶22. (SBU) The Deputy Secretary said the effects of climate change on the Arctic (increased navigation, tourism, and oil and gas exploration) had been the subject of discussion at the conference. The U.S. was committed to participating in negotiations and prepared to make binding commitments in those talks, provided other nations do so as well. He highlighted the President's Major Economies Process and the upcoming G8 meeting in Japan.

¶23. (U) In response to a question about whether the Greenland Home Rule government would be invited to subsequent meetings held outside Greenland, FM Lavrov simply thanked the Danish government for organizing the conference and inviting Russia to participate. The Deputy Secretary said it had been very valuable to hear directly the perspective of the Premier and FM Hammond, and noted that they made interventions on virtually every subject discussed at the conference. Asked if the Ilulissat Declaration would change U.S. and Canadian disagreement over the Northwest Passage, Lunn said that was a different issue.

¶24. (U) Asked if the "race for the Arctic" had ended in Ilulissat, FM Moeller gave an emphatic "Yes," and minister Lunn called out "it never started!," concluding the exchange with the press.

Comment  
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¶25. (SBU) The conference achieved FM Moeller's declared aims, and went largely according to plan. Conference outcomes were never in doubt, with the Ilulissat Declaration negotiated beforehand between all participants. FM Lavrov seemed keen to downplay Russian flag-planting and earn Russia credit for its search and rescue proposal. Stoere's announcement of a fall Arctic Council meeting to brief on Ilulissat will presumably help allay concerns of Council members not invited to the conference (Iceland, Sweden and Finland). Beyond that, no follow-up meeting of the five coastal states was planned, although FM Moeller left that door open.

¶26. (U) The Deputy Secretary's party reviewed this cable.  
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